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WHEDON

CASSADAY

ASTONISHING X-MEN

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WHAT DO YOU DONE...

REDUCED YOU TO THE STATUS OF A POCKET CALCULATOR, DEAR...

NOT OVEEERRRR...

NOT YET...

ALLOW MMMMEE... TO SHHHHARE...

...A THOUGHT...

SO, HONEY...

...YOU READY TO TALK ABOUT THIS?

POINTLESS.

CAN'T MESS WITH MY MIND, LADY...

...I ALREADY LOST IT.

BLAM!

I'M SORRY, SOMEONE IS TRYING TO GET IN, ARE YOU, YES, ALL RIGHT?

STILL CAN'T ACCESS MY POWERS, BUT OTHERWISE I'M FINE FOR NOW, BLINDFOLD--JUST KEEP YOUR DEFENSES UP IN THERE.

I WILL TRY, BUT I MAY BECOME DISTRACTED.

BY WHAT?

TERROR.

PROFESSOR McCOY.

EXCUSE ME, I CANNOT FIND YOUR THOUGHTS--I KEEP CLOSE WATCH ON PROFESSOR SUMMERS, HE HAS OVERESTIMATED, EXCUSE ME, MY ABILITIES.

ARE YOU GOING TO EAT ME?

I THINK YOU HAVE EATEN, GOOD, THIS IS GOOD.

EXCEPT WE'LL NEED, YES, A HEAD COUNT OF THE STUDENTS LATER.

YOU CAN'T UNDERSTAND ME, MY VOICE, MY THOUGHTS, ME.

PROFESSOR SUMMERS WARNED ME YOU MIGHT BE REDUCED, DEVOLVED.

GONE.

HE TOLD ME, IF I COULDN'T REACH YOU, I HAD TO GIVE YOU THIS.

PROPERTY OF HANK McCOY. DO NOT TOUCH.

SOMETHING YOU TWO TALKED ABOUT. WHAT YOU MIGHT WANT, MIGHT HAVE TO DO, JUST IN CASE. HE SAID.

JUST IN CASE.

I'M GOING TO ASSUME THE BREAKWORLD TECHNOLOGY HASN'T GOTTEN TO DOORKNOBS.

WHERE IS HE?

I TOLD YOU, THEIR COMPUTER IS RUNNING GAMES WITH ME. AND THE PSYCHIC INTERFERENCE IS...THERE'S MULTIPLE PATTERNS.

I'M SURE HE'S DOWN HERE SOMEWHERE.

CAN'T YOU JUST BRING THEIR COMPUTER TO LIFE?

AS I LEARNED WITH THE WILD SENTINEL, THAT DOESN'T INSURE COMPLIANCE. WHICH IS, I SUPPOSE, AS IT SHOULD BE.

HE'S DOWN HERE. I'LL PINPOINT HIM IN A MOMENT.

KRASSH!

OR, POSSIBLY, HE'LL HEAR US COMING.

SHTO..?

SCOTT?

BLAM!

PETE, HEY.

YOU WOULD NOT BELIEVE THE DAY I'M HAVING.

KATYA!

SHE'S OKAY. I'M TRYING TO GET HER TO WAKE UP.

BY SHOOTING PEOPLE?

PETER, PLEASE. I'M AN X-MAN. I DON'T SHOOT PEOPLE.

I'M JUST TRYING TO MAKE A POINT.

BLAM!

GUNSHOTS?

IS THAT LOGI--

"LOGICAL"?

YOU COME BACK *HERE* AND YOU WORRY ABOUT *LOGIC?*

I DON'T THINK I KNOW THIS ONE.

WHAT CAN SH--

SOMETHING TO DO WITH ARMOR, I RECALL.

YOU RECALL WING?

YOU TWO REMEMBER MY *BEST FRIEND?*

GIRL, I RESPECT YOUR GRIEF. I ALSO KNOW YOU CAN ONLY MAINTAIN THAT ARMOR FOR SO LONG. AND NEITHER OF US HAS AN ISSUE WITH KILLING YOU.

THIS WAS ILL-PLANNED.

YEAH.

I'M THE IDIOT.

NO!!

KITTY, IT'S ALL RIGHT, WE--

DON'T TOUCH ME!!

YOU TOUCH ME AFTER WHAT YOU LET THEM DO TO OUR...

...OUR SON...?

IT'S NOT YOUR SON, KITTY...YOU WERE TRICKED. WHATEVER YOU THINK...

THAT GREEN BLOB WILL DESTROY US, WILL DESTROY EVERYTHING, UNLESS YOU CAN HELP.

YOU GOTTA FIND HER, KITTY.

NOW THIS FEELS BETTER.

YOU'VE GOT TO SAVE EMMA.

I THINK YOU'RE MISSING THE POINT.

ANYTHING YOU REMOVE, I CAN REROUTE OR REASSIMILATE.

AND YOUR METAL CAN'T BREACH MY ARMOR.

I'VE FACTORED THAT.

AAOOWWH!!

KID!

ADAMANTIUM IS NOT LIKE OTHER METALS.

YES...

THERE'S A MASTER OF MAGNETISM BLOWS IN AND OUT OF HERE NOW AND AGAIN, MAKES ALL MANNER OF TROUBLE.

SO I'VE BEEN TINKERING.

HOW IS SHE?

IT'S NOT TOO BAD.

IT'S TOO BAD FOR *ME*... AGGHHHH...

I'VE FACTORED THAT.

HOW?

IT'S TECHNICAL. BUT *"BIG MAGNET"* COVERS A LOT OF IT. NO ONE MADE OF METAL OR WEARING WAY TOO MUCH OF IT IS GOING ANYWHERE FOR A WHILE.

NO, YOU.

AH, YES, ME.

BALL OF STRING.

SYNTHETIC FIBER LACED WITH PHEROMONES, AEROSOL SMART-DRUGS, LIGHT SEQUENCES...LIKE OPENING A SERIES OF DOORS, EACH SMELL, EACH SEQUENCE...

THE PROFESSOR AND I WORKED ON IT AFTER NOVA'S FIRST ATTACK. UNDER HYPNOSIS, I ASSOCIATED MY MOST COMPLEX BRAIN FUNCTIONS WITH THESE KEY--

ALL RIGHT. GOT IT. CLASS DISMISSED, YEESH.

AND YOU?

HAD A BEER.

SAME BASIC PRINCIPLE.

OW!

QUIT WHINING, KID. I GOT *EATEN* TODAY.

YES, ABOUT THAT...

FORGET IT.

I CAN'T BEGIN TO APOLOGIZE

PFFT! THAT'S WHAT FRIENDS ARE FOR.

I'M FAIRLY CERTAIN IT'S NOT.

LEAST YOU DIDN'T TURN INTO PERCY DOVETONSILS. HOW LONG THAT MAGNET GONNA HOLD 'EM?

NOT SURE. ARE THEY WITH NOVA?

I DON'T KNOW WHO'S WITH WHAT AROUND HERE. I THINK THE HELLFIRE CLUB'S IN IT--SAW EMMA ZOMBIFY KITTY, SEND HER DOWN HERE. WE WERE FOLLOWING.

NOT EMMA.

OLD-SCHOOL LOOK AND EVERYTHING. DON'T KNOW WHAT'S DOWN HERE THAT--

I DO.

SAME NIGHTMARE FIFTY TIMES LAST NIGHT

DO YOU LIKE DIAMONDS

WHEN I THINK ABOUT EVIL

BUT YOU DO PLAY GAMES WITH *ME*

DON'T HAVE ANY CLAWS

WITH ALL MY PREDATOR'S HEART

DEATH.

HOW COMMON.

NOO... NOT FOR ME...

I BELONG... BELOW ..

CRY ME A RIVER, BITCH.

WE'RE GOING UP.

THERE IS NO HELLFIRE CLUB.

WE'RE READY, DEAR.

CONSTRUCTING AUXILIARY SELF, ESTIMATE SEVEN MINUTES TO REROUTE.

CASSANDRA NOVA.

SHAW.

I DON'T KNOW. A KID.

DID ANY OF YOU EVER SEE MORE THAN ONE OF THEM AT A TIME?

FORGET PRYDE, SHE'S TOO RESISTANT.

I NEED MY CONSCIOUSNESS OUT OF THAT SLUG NOW.

AND I'VE TAKEN A NEW FANCY.

...ATTACKED. ALL SEPARATELY, ALL PSYCHICALLY.

SHAW'S ATTACK WAS NOT PSYCHIC.

I COULDN'T MOVE, PETE, BUT I *WAS* CONSCIOUS IN THAT LAB.

"SHAW WAS NEVER THERE."

AHHH...THAT CONSCIOUSNESS IS LIKE AN OYSTER...

I'VE BEEN "*SHOOTING*" HER MANIFESTATIONS— SHE CAN'T MAINTAIN THEM. THEY FADE

SO EMMA'S A ONE-MAN BAND. WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

I DON'T THINK SHE IS.

RIGHT.

LET'S GET THE REST OF THAT ARMOR OFF YOU.

YOUR LITTLE PRIVATE HELL, COURTESY OF CASSANDRA NOVA.

MINE'S MUCH MORE UPSCALE-- YOU SHOULD COME FIND ME SOME TIME.

OF COURSE...IT WAS EMMA WHO STUCK CASSANDRA NOVA'S CONSCIOUSNESS INTO THAT BLOB IN THE FIRST PLACE.

SO NOVA DOES A "*HAIL MARY*" INTO EMMA'S BRAIN BEFORE SHE FADES...

ONE TINY SUGGESTION. TOO SMALL TO NOTICE, BUT CLAMPED ON TO EMMA'S GREATEST WEAKNESS, FEEDING, GROWING... CREATING AN ENTIRE REALITY FOR EMMA.

AND THAT WEAKNESS?

GUILT.

GUILT ABOUT FALLING IN WITH SHAW, BECOMING THE WHITE QUEEN, FAILING HER STUDENTS IN GENOSHA...

...SURVIVING.

SURVIVOR'S GUILT IS UNBELIEVABLY POWERFUL. THE RANDOMNESS OF WHO LIVES, THE RESPONSIBILITY TOWARDS THOSE WHO DIDN'T...

THERE'S A VOICE IN HER TELLING HER SHE'S EVIL, SHE'S ALWAYS BEEN EVIL, THAT EVEN GENOSHA WAS ALL HER FAULT.

AND SHE THINKS THAT VOICE IS HERS.

NO!

KITTY!

THREE YEARS! THREE YEARS OF HORROR THIS MANIAC STUCK IN MY HEAD AND YOU'RE GIVING ME AN INSANITY PLEA?

TRY TO CONCENTRATE, DEAR. TIME IS BECOMING A FACTOR.

DOESN'T ANYBODY CARE ABOUT WHAT SHE DID TO US?

FOLLOWING SCOTT'S LOGIC, WHAT EMMA DID WAS CONFRONT US WITH OUR WORST FEARS.

...WHICH WE FACED, AND HERE WE STAND.

I'VE LOST MY POWER, KITTY.

I MEAN, I'M NOT *"CURED"*, BUT I CAN'T EVEN BEGIN TO ACCESS IT. EMMA BROKE ME RIGHT DOWN, AND I'M...

I'M SEEING REALLY CLEARLY.

MY PRISON, OPEN AT LAST.

NOW, GENTLY...

YEAH, SEE I DIDN'T GET THE SELF-HELP SEMINAR. EMMA RIPPED MY HEART OUT.

OF COURSE SHE DID. SHE HAD TO.

SO I'D OPEN A BOX. THAT'S WHY SHE BROUGHT ME HERE...ALL THIS TIME...

KITTY, UNDERSTAND...

CASSANDRA BROUGHT YOU HERE TO OPEN THE BOX.

WHAT EMMA BROUGHT YOU HERE TO DO...

...IS WHAT YOU'RE DOING NOW.

DO IT NOW.

IF YOU CAN HEAR ME, EMMA, HEAR THIS: YOU CAN SEND CASSANDRA BACK.

YOU HAVE A CHOICE.

GO TO HELL.

ROUND 'EM UP.

"SET COURSE FOR THE BREAKWORLD."

GONE.

IT'S OKAY, WE'RE GONNA BE OKAY. WERE YOU ASLEEP?

THEY'VE GONE AWAY. FAR.

THE X-MEN? HEY, THEY'LL BE BACK.

NOT ALL OF THEM.

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EMPIRE